

**Delta Emergency Response Planning Workshop
Thursday, April 10, 2008
Courtland, CA**

Response to Comments

This “Response to Comments” document was prepared by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and includes the responses by DWR to the comments received at the Delta Emergency Response Planning workshop in Courtland. Comments were submitted in several forms (blue handouts, green cards, white board, and those submitted directly to DWR) and have all been compiled into this document.

Partner agencies involved at the workshop include the Delta Protection Commission (DPC), Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (CA-OES), 5-County Flood Response Group (Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo County OES offices), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). These partner agencies have reviewed this document.

Any questions or comments can be submitted to Bill Croyle at wcroyle@water.ca.gov.

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Blue Handout Comments

Handout #1

Question: What are you most interested in regarding emergency response in the Delta?

Equipment resources need to be identified and in place prior to emergency. Also need mutual aid agreement with Fed and State similar to how CDF has.

DWR Response:

Equipment and resources are already in-place to address emergency situations in the Delta. DWR has identified the need for pre-established transfer facilities with initial stores of rock to respond to an emergency multiple levee breach scenario. If your agency has recommendations, please submit your ideas. Second, DWR will investigate your recommendation.

DWR has an existing Memorandum of Understanding with the Corps to request technical assistance and/or advance measures under Public Law 84-99.

Question: Anything you'd like to share about the Delta emergency response planning? N/A

Question: Questions you would like answered tonight or a future meetings? N/A

Handout #2

Question: What are you most interested in regarding emergency response in the Delta?

If a major levee(s) break occurs, are the plans ready to repair and pump out? If so, estimated costs for repairs and pumping and estimated time frame.

DWR Response:

There is no accurate method of estimating the costs of a levee-break and its associated timeframes, or its impacts to property and life safety before it has occurred. Response efforts to flooded areas will be made at the time of the event. Information on prioritization of response efforts is being developed by the Delta Risk Management Strategy (DRMS) team. Please see the attached link for more information about DRMS: <http://www.drms.water.ca.gov>.

DWR and other agencies have historical data regarding previous disasters in the Delta and their associated costs. The After Action Report for the recent levee breach at Jones Tract provides excellent information regarding costs and timeframes for repair. You can locate this information at: http://www.dfm.water.ca.gov/pubs_int/2004_AAR_Jones_Tract.pdf

Question: Anything you'd like to share about the Delta emergency response planning? N/A

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Question: Questions you would like answered tonight or at future meetings:

\$100 Question: How do we integrate water quality issues, water supply, subsidence, (?) population crashes, increased pressure on receiving waters and levees due to more impermeable surfaces in developed area and increased runoff and rising water levels due to global warming w/ Delta residents needs?

DWR Response:

DRMS evaluates such scenarios. These scenarios will be used in the development of the DWR Delta Emergency Operations Plan to evaluate various response needs and effectiveness. Please see the attached link above for more information about DRMS.

Delta Vision is also working to address similar concerns. Established by Governor Schwarzenegger's Executive Order S-17-06, the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force was to "develop a durable vision for sustainable management of the Delta" with the goal of "...managing the Delta over the long term to restore and maintain identified functions and values that are determined to be important to the environmental quality of the Delta and the economic and social well-being of the people of the state." It also directed the Task Force to develop a Strategic Implementation Plan by October 2008. Please see the attached link for more information about Delta Vision at: <http://www.deltavision.ca.gov/>

DWR is working to improve data monitoring of these changes and improve modeling estimates of future changes. Mitigation and adaptation strategies will need to balance all the issues listed in the above question. No one solution will address all the potential issues, but updating emergency response plans and integrated flood management strategies are part of the response to climate change.

Handout #3

Question: What are you most interested in regarding emergency response in the Delta?
Planning process as applied to ER process including resources and data collection.

DWR Response:

The emergency response process has evolved through a process of careful regional planning. DWR has been working closely with the DPC, Corps, State OES, and the five Delta county OES offices in developing its concept version of the Emergency Operations Plan for the Delta. Public distribution of this document is scheduled for December 2009.

Question: Anything you'd like to share about the Delta emergency response Planning?
Do any of "the collaboration" belong to the EPA/Coast Guard Regional Response Team?

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DWR Response:

In the event of a hazardous material spill and levee break, the EPA is directly involved. During an emergency, the Coast Guard has jurisdiction over the traffic and speed of various water craft, shipping, access closures, and search and rescue. As DWR's planning process continues, DWR will continue to engage additional agencies to address their involvement and concerns.

Question: Questions you would like answered tonight or at future meetings:

Lessons learned from Katrina (flooding in Delta enviro or setting)?

DWR Response:

Although there were several lessons learned from Katrina, the most important lesson learned is that major disasters can and do occur and that agencies need to be prepared. Although residents in California do not have to worry too much about hurricanes, preparing for the threat of a major earthquake in or near the Delta region is vital. The Delta Risk Management Strategy (DRMS) evaluates such scenarios. Please follow the attached link for more information about DRMS: <http://www.drms.water.ca.gov/>. Also, FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/hurricane/2005katrina/index.shtm> should provide informative reports and fact sheets regarding Hurricane Katrina.

Handout #4

Question: What are you most interested in regarding emergency response in the Delta?
Water Quality Concerns

Question: Anything you'd like to share about the Delta emergency response Planning?

The State water contractors would like to see more comprehensive effort to protect water quality in an emergency.

DWR Response:

In addition to life and property, the DWR Delta Emergency Operations Plan will address methodologies to limit the impact to water quality in the Delta.

Question: Questions you would like answered tonight or at future meetings? N/A

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Handout #5

Question: What are you most interested in regarding emergency response in the Delta?
Consulting (?) Ready Response

DWR Response:

N/A

Question: Anything you'd like to share about the Delta emergency response planning?
Over emphasis \$\$ on environmental (?)

DWR Response:

Comment noted.

Questions you would like answered tonight or at future meetings:

How do we justify spending 48%+ on environmental issues?

DWR Response:

Part of any emergency response efforts or projects is addressing and/or mitigating for environmental issues. The Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force is charged with developing a strategy for managing a sustainable ecosystem within the Delta. Details on the Delta Visions efforts on environmental issues can be found at <http://deltavision.ca.gov>.

Handout #6

Question: What are you most interested in regarding emergency response in the Delta?
What Ron Baldwin, S.J. County OES said: "Get other larger agencies & to commit to respond right away from the get-go to hold the levee and, thus, prevent massive amounts of damage which state and federal governments will have to end up paying a large part of. Also should make sure levee breaks is closed as soon as possible to minimize damage to interior levees, seepage and water quality etc."

DWR Response:

Comment noted.

It is the responsibility of the Local Maintaining Agency (LMA) to prepare for and respond to levee breaks. Locals will inform county and State OES offices along with DWR about their response actions and request assistance if needed. As local resources are exhausted, additional funds can be requested through DWR to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Public Law 84-99. Part of DWR's Delta Emergency Preparedness and Response effort will improve response capabilities at all levels - from the LMA up to the federal.

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Question: Anything you'd like to share about the Delta emergency response planning?
N/A

Questions you would like answered tonight or at future meetings:
N/A

Handout #7

Question: What are you most interested in regarding emergency response in the Delta?
Enough CDF crews to sandbag boils. Enough DWR flood inspection section. Inspectors in the Delta during events.

DWR Response:

DWR's Flood Project Integrity and Inspection Group have inspectors that perform semi-annual and annual inspections of the levees. In addition to DWR staff, CDF and CCC crews provide support to DWR during emergency events.

DWR will continue to provide training to all organizations that request the Flood Fighting course offered by the Department. DWR staff provide training to approximately 750-1000 people annually.

Question: Anything you'd like to share about the Delta emergency response planning?
The District Superintendent needs a pay increase.

DWR Response:
No comment.

Questions you would like answered tonight or at future meetings:
N/A

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Green Card Comments

Comment #1:

Excellent format! Lots of good info. Where are the first responders, police, fire, ambulance? Are they in the Delta MACS meetings? Do the county OES reps take them the info? Bottom line: How does the info get to “grassroots”? Are cities coordinating on evacuation? What about engagement of Caltrans and Public? What can we do to raise visibility of the issue while the plan is developed?

DWR Response:

There is an ongoing effort to increase the number of workshops such as this one and outreach in general to increase awareness and interest in the Delta region. DWR will make a point to get this information out to first responders, private citizens, and other public agencies that may be impacted by or involved in a Delta emergency. A website is being developed that will contain information and will serve as a portal for all interested parties to remain informed about the latest status of this process.

Comment #2:

Shaw has completed a Master Plan of flood control and ecosystem restoration of the State of Louisiana. It is also very experienced in emergency preparedness. We would be glad to help the Fed, State and local communities with their emergency planning efforts.

DWR Response:

Comment noted.

Comment #3

We need a joint Local, State and Fed immediate flood fight response; currently locals must request DWR to request Corps assistance based on an undefined criteria if need exhaustion of resources and for non-project levees a question of federal interest. Levee breaks need to be closed immediately at flooded areas as soon as possible dewatered as soon as possible to avoid a growing disaster. Local reclamation districts do not have the capability of funding for break closures or dewatering especially when flooded. Exhaustion of resources should be replaced with a recognized sharing of costs and responsibility.

DWR Response:

DWR understands that there are limited resources available at the local level for emergency response. Accordingly, the current policy requires that all local funding sources must be exhausted prior to State or federal involvement. As local resources are exhausted, additional funds can be requested through DWR to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Public Law 84-99. Part of DWR’s Delta Emergency Preparedness and Response effort will improve response capabilities at all levels from the LMA up to the federal.

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Part of DWR's work over the next few years will be to assess the preparedness and response capacity at the local, State, and federal levels.

Comment #4:

I'm wondering how you plan to get information on the ground from in-Delta residents who may not know about or feel comfortable attending meetings such as this, but can give useful input/localized knowledge nonetheless (e.g. farm workers, low income people who can't take time off from work, people with limited English skills, etc.) Do you plan to provide outreach to obtain those viewpoints? I am very impressed that you are so open to community input!

DWR Response:

This was a first attempt to outreach to the Delta community. DWR is working on a Community Relations Plan that will provide a demographic outline of community needs (like English as a second language, workshops held during evening hours or on weekends, etc.) in order to better communicate to in-Delta residences for future outreach events.

Comment #5:

What's the schedule – Dates, times, locations for subsequent meetings, workshops, etc? Please add me to your notification list.

DWR Response:

DWR has added you onto the mailing list for future Delta endeavors. Currently, DWR does not have a specific schedule for meetings and/or workshops in the Delta on the Emergency Preparedness and Response Program. Other stakeholder meetings, in coordination with other programs and activities, will also be conducted on an as needed basis.

Comment #6:

Interesting event. I'd like to see other agencies such as NOAA and USGS involved in this process. I'd like to see information about vulnerable areas: such as GIS maps indicating the areas vulnerable to levee failure, flooding and earthquake damage. Thanks.

DWR Response:

DWR is working with NOAA and USGS on other flood related issues but outreach efforts will be expanding to other State and Federal agencies over the next few months.

Regarding GIS maps, FEMA is the foremost resource for flood mapping. Russ Rote with the Corps is currently working with the five Delta counties on improving GIS mapping resources.

In addition, the Delta Risk Management Strategy (DRMS) has evaluated an earthquake scenario in the Delta. Please follow the link <http://www.drms.water.ca.gov> for more information about DRMS.

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Comment #7:

As a member of the general public, you can not imagine how disgusting it is to constantly hear moaning about lack of funding. We are being taxed to extinction. Stop moaning & do something.

DWR Response:

Comment noted.

Comment #8:

Great Forum – Need these on a regular basis to follow up on any progress being made, considering no questions were answered.

DWR Response:

DWR, along with its partners, are planning on hosting another public forum in the summer. DWR has placed you on our mailing list and will notify you.

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Community Responses (White Board)

1) What would you like to learn tonight?

Who is really in charge?

DWR Response:

Who is in charge is dependent on the type of emergency and the size of the incident. There are several public agencies that have a stake in the Delta. Although no single agency is “in charge” of the Delta, the primary agencies that become involved once an emergency arises starts with the local jurisdiction and the county Office of Emergency Services and moves up to the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services. For flood fighting activities, the state involvement is through the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and moves up to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the federal level.

By working closely with these local, State, and federal agencies and the public, DWR will update its emergency protocols in its upcoming Emergency Operations Plan. A concept-draft paper (from April 2007) is currently under review at this time. The final version of this document is scheduled to be released by late 2009 or early 2010.

2) What key Delta emergency response issues are important to you?

How do we pay for the planning efforts at the local level?

DWR Response:

DWR will work with locals to address planning on emergency preparedness and response efforts.

3) Which local, state, or federal Delta emergency response planning efforts would you like to hear more about? N/A

4) Which individuals or organizations (public or private) need to be involved in any Delta emergency planning and response dialogue?

USGS, NOAA

5) Additional comments...

- Providing GIS Maps indicating, the zones more likely to Flood
- Earthquake zone
- Collaborative efforts between federal, state and local efforts are extremely important and effective.
- There is not enough money to fund all the needed projects that the federal, state and local agencies need to accomplish. We need to find a way and encourage, private funding to augment and help the governmental objectives.

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East Bay Municipal Utility District Comments

1. If a regional disaster event was to damage EBMUD's Mokelumne Aqueducts at the Stockton Deep Water Channel crossing, would it be possible to temporarily close the Stockton Deep Water Channel to ship traffic in order to allow the necessary Aqueduct pipe repair work to be completed? Current EBMUD engineering staff evaluations indicate that it might be necessary to close the Channel for several weeks at a time, and that it would take approximately six months to completely repair any significant damage to EBMUD's largest pipeline. Furthermore, an additional eighteen months may be required to repair EBMUD's other two pipelines, if they are damaged during a regional event.

DWR Response:

DWR is currently in the early stages in developing an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for the Delta Region. The closure of deep-water channels is a major consideration in planning Delta emergency response strategies. The plan must consider a wide range of event parameters such as location, intensity, and extent. In addition to life and property, the array of responses will also consider critical infrastructure.

2. It is EBMUD's understanding that DWR, as part of its Delta Emergency Operations Plan intends to enter into contracts for marine contractors, barges, construction contractors, etc. to facilitate DWR response in a disaster event. If this is the case, and EBMUD experiences substantial damage to one or more of its Aqueduct pipelines, DWR's pre-established contracts may tie-up these specialized resources and result in EBMUD being unable to secure these limited resources. If these resources are not available then EBMUD would not be able to initiate repair activities in a timely manner (as outlined above) resulting in severe water shortage for EBMUD's customers.

DWR Response:

DWR has contracts in place at the current time and can implement emergency contracts to insure a level of readiness in the event of a disaster. Availability of resources and identifying additional resources to respond to a large-scale event will be a major consideration in updating the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan.